

Fast Facts on the
U.S. Government's work in

HAITI

SHELTER, HOUSING, AND SETTLEMENTS

Background Information

A lack of adequate, affordable housing has been a long-standing issue in Haiti—the destruction caused by the 2010 earthquake has only exacerbated this problem.

The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has been a leader in the shelter and settlements sector, both during the emergency response and in the longer-term reconstruction effort. In the immediate aftermath, USAID worked with the Government of Haiti, the international community, and non-governmental organizations to together provide emergency shelter to 1.5 million displaced persons. Following the emergency phase, USAID provided shelter solutions to more than 328,000 people through transitional shelters, repairs to damaged houses, support to host families who housed displaced people, and rental vouchers.

USAID's initial housing reconstruction effort focused on replacing some of the housing stock lost as a result of the earthquake. Recognizing that the need far exceeds what all of the donor efforts could meet, USAID shifted to an emphasis on working in existing neighborhoods, helping the private sector to play a more prominent role in housing construction, and providing low-income households with access to better housing finance to help them rebuild their communities on their own.

As a result of these and other efforts, as of September 2014 almost 94 percent of the estimated 1.5 million Haitians in displaced persons camps (IDPs) following the earthquake have left the camps for alternative housing options.



Photo Credit: Emile Manigat/USAID

Long-Term Reconstruction: Creating Community-Based, Sustainable Housing Solutions

Today, the Government of Haiti and international partners, including the United States, continue to find durable housing options for the remaining IDPs, as well as the hundreds of thousands of other low-income households who live in substandard housing conditions. As part of the U.S. Government's sustained commitment to Haiti's long-term development, USAID is focusing on cost-effective ways to increase durable housing stock while fostering successful communities and engaging the private sector. This approach leverages the demonstrated ability of low-income Haitian households to build with their own resources. Examples of this approach include neighborhood upgrades, permanent housing and community building, rental subsidies to foster clearance of IDP camps, and housing finance opportunities. In order to create a model that is both successful and sustainable, USAID is collaborating with the Government of Haiti, international donors, and local communities.

Collaborating on Neighborhood Improvements

USAID signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Haiti to assist with urban planning for informal, post-earthquake communities and with financial institutions to assist owner-financed construction. As part of this MOU, USAID and the Government of Haiti will coordinate a jointly financed urban development pilot

project in an informal settlement, known as Canaan/Jerusalem, which was created as a result of the earthquake. This emerging community, home to an estimated 150,000 residents, has been designated by the Government of Haiti as one of its highest priorities for housing. USAID will assist the Government of Haiti to prepare a single urban development plan and community engagement strategy for the informal settlement and support pilot activities, such as drainage works, the creation of public spaces, as well as roads and footpaths. All of these proposed activities are aimed at improving living conditions and the quality of housing construction done by individual households.

In addition to collaborating with the Government of Haiti on housing solutions, USAID recently signed an MOU with the American Red Cross to support sustainable housing and urban development. This project will focus on the Canaan/Jerusalem settlement. Activities will include urban planning, promoting safer housing, building capacity of local entities to adopt safer and more sustainable construction, and expanding services in the two communities.

Carredeux Community Vitalization Project

USAID is implementing a pilot program that aims to transform the informal settlement of Carredeux into a permanent housing community in an expandable and replicable way. It also aims to increase lower-income access to credit for construction and development. The pilot, which includes 125 safe permanent housing units, will provide durable housing solutions and associated infrastructure to families residing in this IDP camp in Port-au-Prince. Working with partner institutions, USAID will leverage the community's own resources and private sector investment to better ensure community buy-in and sustainability.

Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF)

The HRF, a multi-donor fund created after the earthquake, is a partnership between the Haitian government and the international community to help finance post-earthquake reconstruction. As part of this initiative, the World Bank initiated a \$95 million neighborhood upgrading project, \$65 million of which is funded through a U.S. Government contribution to the HRF. Through this funding, USAID has supported neighborhood upgrades in Port-au-Prince, including rubble removal, house repairs, and the construction of footpaths, drainage lines, retaining walls, and transitional shelters, including innovative two-story transitional shelters. USAID also upgraded and repaired key public and community facilities. So far, these activities have helped approximately 11,000 households safely return to their pre-earthquake communities, and 25,000 households have benefitted from community upgrades.

Community Stabilization Activities

In order to promote sustainability of U.S. Government-funded permanent settlements, USAID is currently implementing community stabilization activities at two of these settlements -- Caracol EKAM and Haut Damier. USAID's Global Development Alliance with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is providing goods and services related to livelihoods and social cohesion to the 156 households at the USAID-funded settlement of Haut Damier and some 350 households in pre-existing communities surrounding it. In Haut Damier, near St. Marc, over 100 residents have received skills training and 35 residents have established a women's association aimed at processing fruit into products such as jellies and jams. UMCOR provided the group with a generator and other tools and equipment to start their business. Additionally, UMCOR installed rainwater catchment systems at homes in the community surrounding Haut Damier. At the Caracol EKAM settlement in northern Haiti, USAID has partnered with Global Communities to provide community engagement, governance, and livelihoods activities as well as day-to-day site management. A tree-planting campaign resulted in the planting of more than 1,000 fruit and shade trees in the community. Other planned community activities include installation of streetlights, distribution of environmentally friendly cookstoves, construction of a marketplace, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene trainings.

Expanding Access to Financial Institutions

USAID is encouraging local financial institutions to lend for new construction as well as provide loans to repair and expand existing homes. For example, part of USAID's Development Credit Authority guarantees with Haitian financial institutions is allocated toward housing finance and construction. Additionally, USAID and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, along with the Clinton Bush Fund, are supporting a mortgage facility for housing micro-finance and construction loans for small business premises.